

crooked things going on. It needs to be investigated by this body. My colleagues on the Democrat side, who are the chairmen of the committees, need to listen.

We need to investigate ACORN.

LEHMAN BROTHERS COLLAPSE

(Mrs. BACHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BACHMANN. Mr. Speaker, it was 1 year ago today that Lehman Brothers collapsed. And as we mark this 1-year anniversary, it is also with trepidation that we remark that the Federal Government today is the leading insurer, the leading lender, and the leading carmaker in the United States, the Federal Government.

Since the inception of Bailout Nation less than 1 year ago today, an economist from Arizona State University has documented, today the Federal Government owns or controls 30 percent of private business profits. That's right, 30 percent. And if President Obama gets his way and nationalizes an additional 18 percent of private wealth in the health care industry, that would be nearly 50 percent of private business profits.

Think of that, 50 percent of private business profits nationalized in less than 1 year's time. We can do better. Let's enjoy freedom. Let's embrace freedom and let's say no to Bailout Nation and to the Federal Government taking over the private economy.

And let's investigate ACORN.

HONORING NASA

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, just a few months ago we celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Apollo mission for NASA, and we are excited as a Nation to think of the brightness and the genius of our country.

Tomorrow, before the Science and Technology Committee, the author of the "Augustine Report" will present his findings regarding NASA. As a representative from the Houston area, where the Johnson Space Center is, I encourage America to be that same genius.

Let's continue manned space flight and continue our exploration in space, as well as our support for the international space station. Out of those efforts come new inventions, new cures for diseases, and new opportunities for the genius of America to be seen around the world. We must continue manned space flight.

Supporting the space centers in Florida and Alabama, California, Mississippi and Texas, I know America can achieve for the future.

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SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, a few days ago, there was a townhall meeting not too far from here in Reston, Virginia. Over 3,000 people were inside and about that many outside who could not get into the school. Now this townhall event was held at South Lakes High School, and one of the security officers there, a Wesley Cheeks, Jr., did not like one of the signs that the protesters were carrying and holding up. The sign apparently was not to the officer's political liking.

So the security officer demanded that out of the thousands of signs at the event, the one he didn't like was going to come down, and he ordered the person to take it down because it was obviously critical of the administration. Note, Mr. Speaker, there was nothing illegal about the sign.

This officer told the man with the sign to put his sign away or he would be arrested. Yes, arrested for freedom of speech and the right to protest. The protester said, This used to be America. Officer Weeks said in response, Well, it isn't any more, okay.

Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not "okay." Not by a long shot. This is still America, the land of the free—the land where we can disagree with government, whether government likes it or not—the land paid for in blood by bold men of noble character and heart and noble action, who understood that free speech undergirds liberty and freedom. They understood that the right to speak the truth to authoritarian power is granted by the Almighty to those bold enough to stand and claim that right. No king, no government, no dictator, and no high school security officer has the right to abuse their authority and suppress freedom of speech.

One of the founding principles of this Nation is freedom of speech. It is so fundamentally important that our Founding Fathers put it first in our Constitution's Bill of Rights, made it the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights, because it is the most important. Without the First Amendment, the rest are meaningless.

The First Amendment simply says, Congress—that's us, folks—shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for redress of grievances.

It is the tendency of all governments to encroach upon the rights of people in this Nation, and other nations. And while many Americans are going about their daily business of work, taking their kids to school, to football practice, to Boy Scouts, grocery shopping, and going to dinner, mowing the grass, and living their lives, don't underestimate that these people are paying attention to what government is doing to them.

Freedom of speech is crucial for folks to get the attention of fellow Americans when the size of government no longer fits the Constitution. Freedom of speech is sacrosanct, and not just for those who agree with government, but it is a holy right, especially for those who disagree with government oppression.

It is the right of a free people to speak truth when the government is wrong. It is the right of the people to gather and stand in the face of their elected officials and speak what they see—tyranny of a government gone amok.

It is the right of a self-governing people to come together in cities around the Nation to speak out and to hold the government accountable when those who seek to rule over us have stepped out of their constitutional bounds.

There can be no more fundamental display of our God-given right to freedom of speech than what we're seeing from the American Resistance Movement today. From townhalls to city streets, the right of free speech is one of the very guardians of the freedom and liberty that make this Nation the greatest in history. And it is the government that would do well to listen, be silent, and then act in the interest of the American people.

And that's just the way it is.

START OF THE FINANCIAL CRISIS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Ohio (Ms. KAPTUR) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, today marks the 1-year anniversary of the fall of Lehman Brothers. Just prior to that, former Treasury Secretary and former Goldman Sachs executive Hank Paulson; Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke; and then-President of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York and now Treasury Secretary, Tim Geithner, bailed out Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and orchestrated the first of multiple tranches of taxpayer money to AIG.

Some mark the fall of Lehman as the start of our financial crisis, but it started long before. It started on Wall Street, the very place that President Obama gave his financial regulatory reform speech today. The President stated, Restoring a willingness to take responsibility—even when it is hard—is at the heart of what we must do. Very carefully worded, Mr. President. But what real reform will assure it?